

**MINUTES OF MEETING
MUNICIPAL BUDGET COMMITTEE
June 13, 2012**

A meeting of the Municipal Budget Committee was called to order at 6:35 PM in the Professional Development Room at Kennett Middle School with the following members present: Chairman Joe Mosca, Danielle Santuccio, Doug Swett, Betty Loynd, Bill Marvel, Ted Sares, Maureen Seavey, Greydon Turner, John Edgerton, Steven Steiner, Michael Fougere, Peter Donohoe and Mike DiGregorio. Excused: Syndi White Absent: Karen Umberger, Maury McKinney and Brian Charles.

Joe Mosca led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Greydon Turner moved, seconded by Betty Loynd, to consider and accept the Minutes of April 4, 2012. In favor: 10; Opposed: 0; Abstain: 3 - Mike DiGregorio, Peter Donohoe and Steven Steiner.

Ted Sares moved, seconded by Betty Loynd, to consider and accept the Minutes of May 9, 2012, as amended. In favor: 11; Opposed: 0; Abstain: 2 - Mike DiGregorio and Doug Swett.

Ted Sares stated that in the Minutes where it states he said that if the meetings were on a Monday he would quit, he didn't quite mean it the way it came off. What he said after that, and if you could make sure to get this down he would appreciate it, was when he signed up to run, he signed up based on the fact that the meetings would be on Wednesday and not Monday.

OTHER BUSINESS

Chairman Mosca stated he passed out to all members a proposed schedule and has found that there are a couple of mistakes. On December 12, 2012 (even though it states 2013) same will be corrected) is one and the Committee is going to be invited by the School Board to their September 24th meeting to have a joint session with them. That is not on the proposed schedule, but will be when he revises same. It will not be a mandatory meeting, but he thought there should be as many members as possible there as he thought it would show good faith in working with them. They are going to be starting their budget process at that time and any input the Committee may have at that time will be beneficial. He knows that September 24th is a Monday night because they meet on Mondays. Syndi (White) had sent the Chairman an e-mail about the meeting.

Chairman Mosca opened the discussion on the proposed schedule. Chairman further stated that what he did was take last year's schedule and pretty much mirrored it for this year. He did make a couple of changes: one being February 6, 2013 - instead of doing the non-profits on a Saturday morning, do it on a Wednesday evening and he put vote afterwards. There was some pre-meeting discussion about that because it may be a long meeting and maybe we shouldn't vote after that meeting, but vote on everything at the same time. Chairman stated that was open for

interpretation or discussion. He wanted to put something together so that everyone would have an idea of what is going to happen when. This is completely subject to change; this is his thoughts and ideas. This does not have to be changed tonight, but if there are changes for tonight that's great, but he would ask everyone to look at it between now and the next meeting which is August 8, 2012 and at that point in time we can solidify it and he can get the schedule out to Karen (Hallowell) at Town Hall so that she can make sure that we can have the room. He was trying to have every meeting here as it was easier and more convenient for everybody and the quicker we are to reserve the room, the quicker we are to have the room.

Ted Sares stated he thought the idea to have the vote after the non-profits was a great one because every year he's been on the Budget Committee you wait for a few weeks and then give it a short shrift. We do it after a meeting and everybody stands up and we go through it real fast after another meeting and we don't give it the kind of attention it deserves. He thought having it right afterwards made sense and he, for one, reacts initially very positive about it.

Chairman Mosca stated he believed, and asked to be corrected if he was wrong, but two years ago we met as a Budget Committee, not with the Selectmen, and he believed we voted for the non-profits after that meeting. He didn't think we held off and waited.

John Edgerton stated there's not as many non-profits as there used to be. When there were 20 of them, it took all day. He thought it was a good idea to vote right after.

Greydon Turner asked if that meant there would be no Saturday morning meeting this year. Chairman Mosca stated he was trying to avoid a Saturday meeting because some people work. Greydon stated he was not sad about it, just checking. Chairman stated he had to miss the meeting last year with the non-profits and knew of a couple of other members that had to miss it and he thought if it could be avoided, it should be. Chairman stated he didn't like Saturday meetings period; he didn't like weekend meetings because he thought it was like something was being hidden and we're not. To him, in his mind, that's the way it appears by meeting on weekends and he just didn't like it. That's a personal preference of his.

Chairman Mosca advised that the next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, August 8, 2012. This will be a mid-year budget review for the Town and the School. He has talked with Earl Sires who will be here that evening; he has not confirmed with the Superintendent of the schools yet. If he can't be here, we will get another representative to come and discuss the School Budget and where they are at.

Maureen Seavey stated it's not mid-year for the School, they are not even into it. They start July 1st. Chairman Mosca stated it will be the end of their year. Mike DiGregorio stated they will have a month and 8 days into their budget. Betty Loynd stated they could discuss last year's budget. John Edgerton stated we will get the end of the year and the Chairman agreed.

Mike DiGregorio stated then that should change to end of the year, end of the 2012 year. Chairman Mosca stated mid-year for the town and end of the year for the School. Mike stated it will be a little bit more than mid-year for the Town, 8 months for the Town.

Mike DiGregorio stated he had something he wanted to bring up concerning the School and Chairman Mosca asked that he bring it up under new business.

NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Mosca stated he wanted to handle this as delicately as he could without offending anybody, but over the last month he received two e-mails and the e-mails had nothing to do with the Budget Committee. He believes the only reason he got the e-mails was because members of the Budget Committee are involved in other things and they probably did a blast. He has heard from some members of the Board and their concerns about receiving e-mails. He asked that if you could refrain from using people's Budget Committee e-mails to send out blast, that would be great. As most should be aware, anything that goes to more than half the members by e-mail has to be included in the meeting Minutes. So, when you send things out that has nothing to do with it, even though it's going to maybe 100 different people, the fact that 9 members of the Budget Committee received that e-mail, technically that e-mail is supposed to be put in the package of Minutes. He asked that, and he knew they were good causes, members refrain from using members e-mail unless you are friendly with people on the outside, he would ask that members refrain from using e-mails of the Budget Committee members.

Danielle Santuccio asked what blast e-mail was. Chairman Mosca stated some people just put an e-mail together and then send to everybody in their e-mail list; it just goes out to everybody.

Mike DiGregorio stated actually it's more restrictive than that; even subcommittee meetings that have less than the majority still fall under the Right To Know Law and even if there is only 4 people on that subcommittee putting e-mails around, those have to be on the record as well. Chairman Mosca agreed and further stated that at this time we don't have any subcommittees so that's not an issue, but we may in the future. We did it last year and who knows what it going to happen this year. That's a good point well taken. Thank you, Mike.

Mike DiGregorio stated unfortunately Syndi (White) isn't here tonight, but he wanted to see how the rest of the Committee felt. The Kindergarten stuff passed, as we all know, and he thought it was important as we go through the budgeting season over the next several years to figure out where the benchmark is for the kids today and how they are reading and writing so we can keep track of it for 4 years. In other words, are we getting our bang for our buck. He wasn't sure how we would even go about that other than having someone explain what the process is now for determining whether a child is at grade level so in 4 years we can say, just throwing numbers out, there are 100 kids, 70 are at grade level and 30 are not. Four years from now there's 100 kids and 80 of them are at grade level and 20 are not. Then you can see improvement.

Betty Loynd stated you can look at the NECAP Test, the 3rd Grade NECAP Test.

Chairman Mosca stopped the meeting advising that this was something he wanted to avoid this year at all costs. Do not talk or speak without being recognized because what happens is we'll have 15 conversations going on at once and Iris (Bowden) can't hear everything and take everything down; even when you hear the tape you can't get it all. Please be recognized before you speak.

Mike DiGregorio stated if the NECAP is the explanation, then that's what Carl (Nelson) or somebody from the School could come in and explain how they benchmark it today. He wants to know exactly in 4 years what we should be looking at so there's no confusion of are we getting our bang for our buck. He believes that Kindergarten is an important avenue to get at grade level reading. It may not financially be the avenue, he doesn't know. He is just throwing it out there to see what people think. Should we try to find out where we are today and get it on our record that in 4 years this is what we're looking at because he thought it was a 4 or 5 year analogy. It is not just something that you can say next year it should be this. Again, when you invest into a first grader, you're really looking at that investment in High School because that's where it's going to pay off. He was just curious to know what people thought about that.

Chairman Mosca stated he didn't know what we, as a Budget Committee, could say other than "yes" or "no" to a budget as far as what the School Board does or doesn't do. We have the right to ask questions.

Mike DiGregorio stated we have the right to see where they are basing their budgetary ideas from. We're not telling them to change academic process, we're simply saying show us where you are academically so that we know dollar for education where it's going. We absolutely have the right to ask those questions.

Betty Loynd stated you could look at the 3rd Grade NECAP Tests to look at how children are doing now and then look at them later.

Ted Sares stated this is a process issue. He thought if he were Mike (DiGregorio) he would talk to Bob Godowski and pose that to him and suggest in the process that he might want to talk to the lady in Jackson who, at the School Board Deliberative meeting, at the Budget Deliberative Meeting, brought out some comparisons between Jackson and other towns, Bartlett and Conway, and he thought she knows how to do that; she really had her act together. That would be the way he would do it; let Bob Godowski do it, that's what he does and he's good at it.

John Edgerton stated the School Board has given us data year after year after year as to what they are doing. You're going to have to keep one year to see what it looks like the next year.

Chairman Mosca stated to Mike's (DiGregorio) point, we could ask them to do a compilation of several years so that we can see how things progress or how things aren't progressing.

Steven Steiner stated to Mike (DiGregorio) let's just say we do the benchmark this year and then 3 years from now there's no difference; does that mean we get rid of Kindergarten. What's the purpose. Mike stated he didn't think that answer would be up to him, it would certainly be up to the people spending the money. If something's not working, then why would you do it. On the other side of that, if the School can defend the expenditure because it is working, then he would assume that he (Steven) would support it because it's working, just like Mike would. That's what he is getting at, we want to know if it's working or if it's not working. He wants to know if all these programs are working or not working. To get back to what Ted (Sares) said, what he means by bringing this out here, he didn't think it was up to him as an individual; in fact, it's not up to any of us as individuals to try to gather data like this, it's up to the Board as a whole to determine whether we want that type of data. These are the decisions that have to be made as a Board.

Chairman Mosca stated we will ask the Board when we are done with the discussion how they want to handle it. If it is such, then we should write something up and have it for whoever's here for the year end review so that they can start it then.

Mike DiGregorio stated he agreed with Betty (Loynd) that probably the NECAP stuff could give us a base line and he wouldn't mind an explanation on how they do it and maybe that's actually for our joint meeting with them in September and could be one of the questions we want to ask and have the people there that can say this is how we do the testing.

Bill Marvel stated he thought the NECAP scores were on the District Report Card every year. If we are going to go 4 years ahead, we should also go 4 years back because trends are more important than spot checks. Mike DiGregorio stated he didn't have a problem with that.

Chairman Mosca asked the members if this was something they wished to bring to the School Board and ask them to compile information for us.

Betty Loynd stated it was a teeny bit premature because they haven't even started Kindergarten yet. Chairman Mosca stated because they are starting it, he thought we need to look back; we have the base line for this year and go forward. It's something most of us won't be here for when the information comes forward. Chairman clarified by stating he meant be on this Board, some may still be on the Board. Some people may not still be on the Board 4 years from now.

Mike DiGregorio stated he thought an explanation in September on how they create that testing data is also important because it's just a simple "oh, yea Johnny's reading; we think Johnny's okay". There's actually a procedure they go through to determine whether Johnny can read or not.

Bill Marvel stated he didn't have new business, but he wanted to mention that since we kind of fought about it last year at the beginning of our process about how many people are delinquent on their taxes. We were given a certain number of percentages of people that were behind and he vaguely remembers that being somewhere between \$1.9 Million and \$2.9 Million and of course it varies month to month as people pay off and then fall farther behind, but he just happened to go to the Town Hall about 6

weeks ago and asked just how many were behind and it just happened to be before Rhoda (Quint) was going to ask the Selectmen to list 105 accounts for sale which means they've been behind for 3 years and at that same moment she had 330 accounts that she was going to ask to have liened which means they were behind 2 years. That's 435 accounts out of 8,000 in the town and that's over 5% that are at least 2 years behind in their taxes.

Mike DiGregorio stated we (the Selectmen) always ask that question about where people's status are and you (Bill Marvel) are right it does change quite a bit depending on where in time and what month you are asking. Ironically, he has been trying to find out if we are we worse off or better off than we were even 5 years ago and according to, as Rhoda (Quint) puts it, it's about the same amount of people. When you start looking at the names which he has access to, it's amazing because some of them actually have money and they just won't pay their taxes and for whatever reason they wait. There are certainly a bunch of people that have issues with paying, but it's amazing the ones that just don't pay them and it's beyond him why because when they get out to a certain date it's 18% interest. It actually represents a tremendous amount of money in revenue on the other side because it comes in as taxes, fees and fines and whatever.

Bill Marvel asked Mike DiGregorio if it was true that the Selectmen often forgive interest. Mike stated no, not very often. Bill stated he had heard just the opposite from other Selectmen. Mike stated you may have heard all sorts of stuff. There are times when they (Selectmen) put people on payment plans and there have been people since he's been on the Board that have taken over other people's property. For example, if you pass away, your wife might get something or something may not have been in somebody else's name, we've done a little bit with interest there, but as a whole they are not in the business of alleviating people's taxes. We may make a payment plan, the majority of people that come in get a payment plan and again, we talk to them over and over again about that interest rate and how it's in their best interest to get it paid off as quick as possible. Whether they take a loan out with a low interest rate or work to get it done.

Doug Swett stated he had a statement that he wanted to read:

"I would like to make a statement to this Committee and also to the School Board and the Board of Selectmen as well as the many citizen tax payers in this town. These two Boards each have sent their representatives here. The fact of the matter is that these two reps are the same two people who developed Warrant Articles 34 & 35 on last year's Warrant. These two Articles were designed to take away the rights of the paying citizens of Conway. Someone should be ashamed of themselves. Thankfully both Articles failed."

Mike DiGregorio asked do we want to debate those two Articles. Chairman Mosca stated we are not going down that road. Mike stated that's ridiculous because he's an appointed person as well. If he supports or doesn't support something personally,

that doesn't mean he has any reason to be here or not be here. It's just his personal opinion.

Ted Sares stated he didn't think he would characterize it as ridiculous, but thought he (Doug Swett) was entitled to express his opinion. Mike DiGregorio stated so was he. Ted further stated the fact of the matter is Ted shares his (Doug's) view to a certain degree because he always thought the Selectmen would use seniority in appointing people to various committees and he thought Crow Dickinson was about 2 years late being on this Board. Ted was amazed that Mike was still here; he has nothing against that, don't get him wrong, but Dave Weathers can do what he wants as Chair of the Committee, but he has real issues also with people on this Committee who want to do away with this Committee. Doesn't make much sense to him, so he supports and reinforces what Doug said.

Mike DiGregorio stated he had real issues with State legislators that are submitting legislation to take away the voters' rights which is what that legislation was trying to do. The Warrant Articles were there to protect voters even though you (Ted Sares) may not think so. We can debate the legislation at any time you want.

Chairman Mosca stopped the comments being made stating we are not going into legislation, we are not going into anything. We are done; subject over. You guys can debate it all you want after the meeting; we are done.

Ted Sares stated his comment had to do with procedure. He thought we have to be careful and he just wanted to slow the Chairman down a bit. There's an approach called strict constructionism and then there's an approach that's a little more flexible. He thought the way to have handled that was "Ted, why not save that for another time" instead of putting your hands out; putting your hands out like that to me, I don't like that. Don't do it.

Chairman Mosca stated to Ted Sares, that's fine, you can tell me whatever you want to tell me. Ted stated he would. Chairman stated he was sure there would be discussions; however, it is not a discussion for now and if you gentlemen would like to continue the discussion after the meeting or at any other time, please feel free to do so, but it is not a budget issue. End of story. Ted stated he wanted to get back to strict construction, but Chairman stated end of story. Ted asked if the Chairman was cutting him off and the Chairman stated yes.

Mike DiGregorio stated in a broader sense, the Selectmen's Office and the School Board take positions on legislation all the time. For some reason, the State legislation that was attempted to pass, directly affects the Budget Committee and he was amazed last year when he asked to get that on the Agenda so we could debate that in open public, nobody wanted to do it. Those pieces of legislation, those House bills, those Senate bills should have been debated here so this Committee could have sent a letter to

Concord to determine whether we support or not support. They directly affected this Budget Committee and the voters in our town and he thought it needed a healthy debate on what was happening. Instead of people writing letters in the paper lying or misleading the public as to what that legislation was about or, more importantly, the Warrant Articles. It should have been debated here. It should have been at the Selectmen's Office and he asked to get it on the Agenda. He asked to get in on here, but he couldn't get it. Again, here we are tonight saying we don't want to talk about it. People are passionate about that legislation and it should have been brought out. Now it's too late and he agreed with that, but that's stuff that's affecting the voters in this whole State and it should have been brought out in public and it should have been open and honest about it. It was all done behind scenes and the public never got to know what was going on.

Chairman Mosca stated he did not disagree; however, as you (Mike DiGregorio) stated right now it's in the past and he thought that we, as a Board, need to move forward and work on this year's budget issues and if there's more legislation this year and you want to put something on the Agenda, let the Chairman know and it will be put on the Agenda. That goes for anybody; anybody wants issues on the Agenda, let him know. What we are talking about now is legislation that is in the past; it doesn't impact us and what he would like to do as a Board is move forward. He understands there are passions on both sides of the issue; however, there's no impact on us right now and we just need to move forward and do what we need to do and that's the budgets.

Betty Loynd stated she agreed with Mike (DiGregorio).

Ted Sares stated Point of Order; Chairman has already stated that the discussion is closed. Chairman Mosca stated the issue is dead. No more discussion; discussion has ended.

Bill Marvel moved, seconded by John Edgerton, to adjourn the meeting at 7:05 PM. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Iris A. Bowden, Recording Secretary